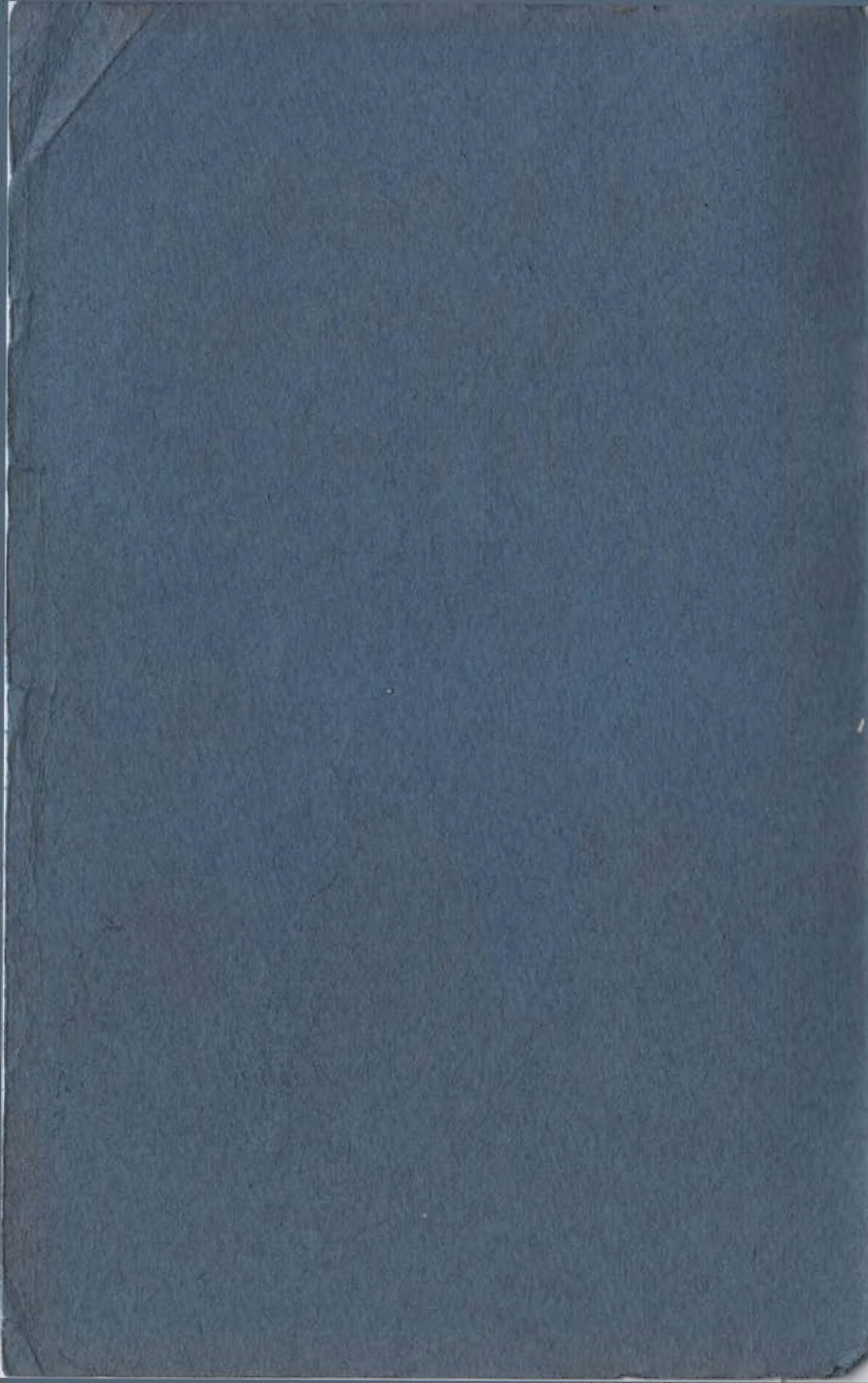


SCENIC
RAILWAY
KATOOMBA





**THE
SCENIC
RAILWAY
AND THE
MOUNTAIN
DEVIL**



**THE STEEPEST INCLINE RAILWAY
IN THE WORLD**



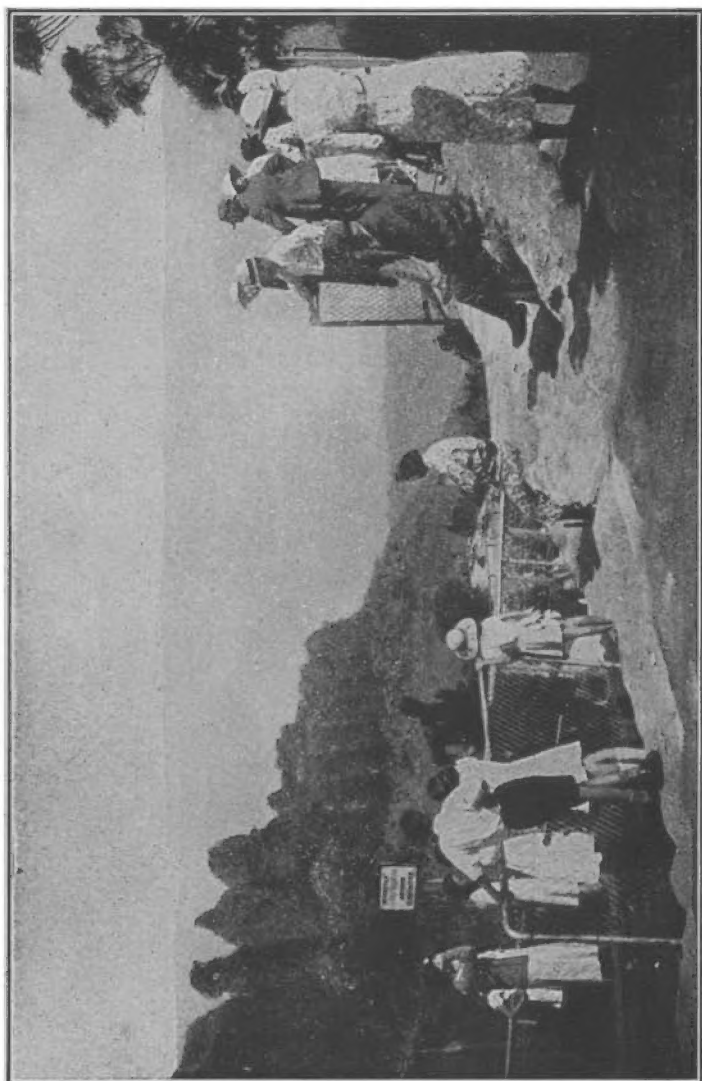
Romance in plenty has surrounded the Blue Mountains of New South Wales since the first explorers set out to conquer the tree-clad gorges, the frowning crags and deep ravines and discover the fertile valleys which lie enfolded in leafy jungles in their midst.

This land of great mountains and wide-spread forests, now smiling in clear bright sunlight, now veiled in half-revealing, half-concealing mists, is one of the loveliest of Australia's many natural playgrounds. The scenery and the climate attract the tourist from all parts of the globe, and the remarkable blue colouring which cloaks the rocky peaks, the pellucid lakes and shadowy gorges like a rich mantle, is world-famed. Where our fathers posted across the Mountains in coaches or on horseback, or tramped as "beloved vagabonds," the trains and motor cars now carry thousands to this happy hunting ground for young and old.



THE SUNLIT CANYON

This picturesque view shows the passenger car half-way down the incline. One might travel far before finding an equally charming and attractive perspective.



SCENIC RAILWAY PLATFORM

Hereabouts are impressive views of The Three Sisters,
Katoomba Falls, Orphan Rock, Mount Solitary,
and the beautiful Jamieson Valley.

Katoomba, queen city of this grand terrain, is set in the midst of so many lovely walks, entrancing views and intriguing vistas which have been so painted, sketched and photographed that they are familiar to thousands who have never set foot in the town.

It has, among other delightful attractions, one which is absolutely unique — the Scenic Railway. For a trifling sum, one is transported in comfort through a veritable fairyland, with the added thrill of descending in safety an almost perpendicular cliff.

The Railway, which is 1,300 feet in length on a grade varying from 15 deg. to 50, was first opened by J. B. North, in 1882, for the purpose of hauling coal, and the first coal was taken to Sydney by bullock waggon. The mine, which is situated $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Katoomba Station, to the South, has for some years been controlled by the Katoomba Colliery Ltd., who opened it to the public as a Scenic Railway in 1933.

Many tourists who had previously been deterred from attempting the journey along the Federal Pass by the terrific climb at either end, were attracted by the prospect of quick and safe transport to the valley. Owing to its unique scenic beauty it proved so popular that a special passenger truck of peculiar design was built, it is so constructed as to give the persons travelling a level seat on the steepest grade.

The winding house contains the latest in modern electric haulage apparatus, the supervisory control gear ensuring absolute safety of operation.

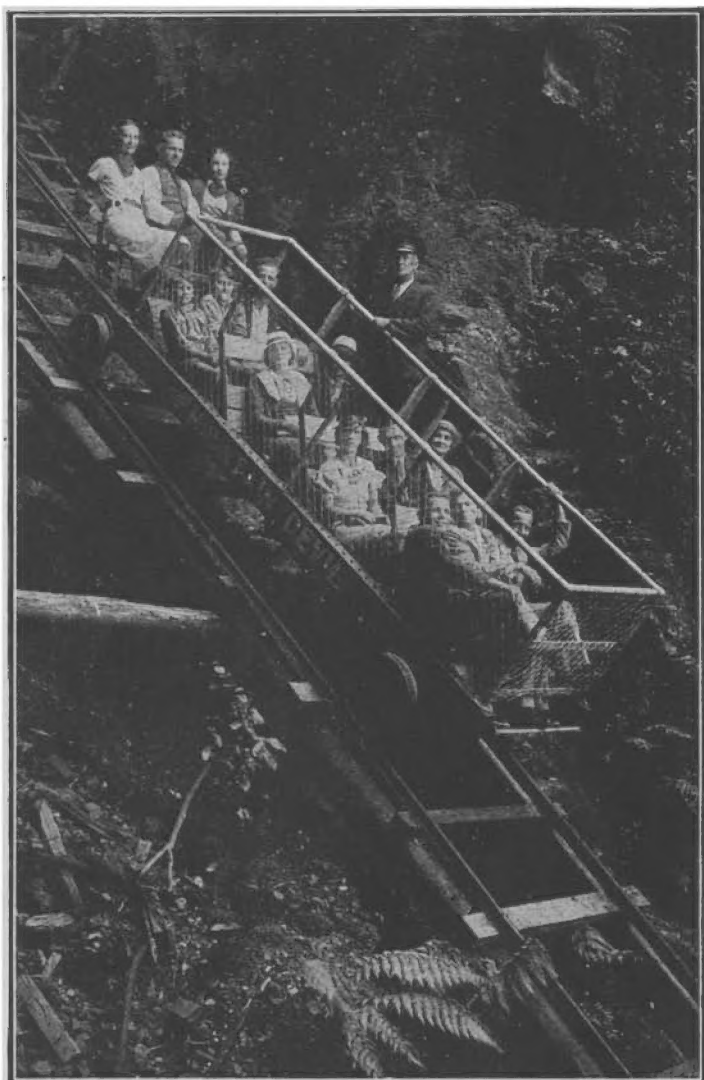
The car carries 15 passengers and as it moves off slowly and enters the tunnel you get your first thrill. The narrow walls of the canyon rise towering to right and left, glimmering coldly black where the damp moss does not cling; the air is cool and pleasant after the hot sun outside and the vegetation that you see through the mouth of the tunnel looks too vivid to be real, like a stage set. Straight ahead you are fascinated by a magnificent picture of the Jamieson Valley and Mount Solitary framed between the Orphan Rock and the main mountain.

Now you are out again in the sunlight, still descending, slowly and surely, that incredible incline. Feathery gum trees and shrubs clothe the slopes, shining silver and green in the light, and tree ferns crowd one another along the track. Brilliant-hued Mountain Parrots swoop chattering through the undergrowth, and a Kookaburra laughs on a nearby bough. As you are travelling at only seven miles per hour you have plenty of time to look about you. Thick vegetation, slender trees and waving fern fronds encompass you till you reach the landing stage near the pit mouth, with the cliffs 650 feet above. Here you may see skips of coal waiting to be hauled up the incline that you have just come down.



THE ORPHAN ROCK

In this unusual view, the Orphan Rock is seen towering above the sub-tropical vegetation of the valley hundreds of feet below, glistening in the last rays of the setting sun.



THE INCLINE

The grade of the incline, as the car emerges from the tunnel is strikingly shown. The happy faces of the passengers show that they are undoubtedly enjoying the experience.



THE LANDING STAGE IN THE VALLEY

Towering in the background The Three Sisters; there is a charming quaintness in the name, which suggests a thousand pleasant recollections to those who have visited the valley.



THE THREE SISTERS

A remarkable series of isolated rocks, standing like giant sentinels over the Jamieson Valley.

A choice of paths confronts you now. You could go along to Katoomba Falls and climb the 1,400 steps to the top again; or you could walk along the Federal Pass for about four miles and so reach Leura. The Giant Stairway is only about two miles away, or you could walk in the opposite direction, past the pit mouth, to the Ruined Castle, four miles away. This new walk has only recently been constructed: it was at one time difficult and hazardous, but now there is a well defined path and to those who are fond of walking and have plenty of time, it offers a variety of scenery.

Under the Landslide lies Dogface Rock, but the Three Sisters still rear their heads triumphantly in the distance, as if challenging any landslide to bury *them*. You follow a trail at times no wider than an Indian's trail across the Landslide, towards Narrow Neck, then through ferny glades and mossy dells, amid sub-tropical vegetation, which at times obscures the sky, past the haunts of the lyre bird and the bell bird, now past abandoned mine tunnels and along the old and worn sleepers of a light railway track built by the inhabitants of a now vanished village of which the very name (if it ever had one) has been forgotten.



It stood near a once-flourishing shale mine, which provided a living for about 200 people. But the cheerful sounds of the village life are heard no more, the wind and the weather have taken toll of the dwellings till only a few ruined chimneys remain to-day. For alas, due to a variety of causes, the mine ceased to flourish, the miners moved elsewhere and the workings fell into ruins. The trailing ends of the cable which once traversed the valley now lie rusting alongside the path to the Landslide.

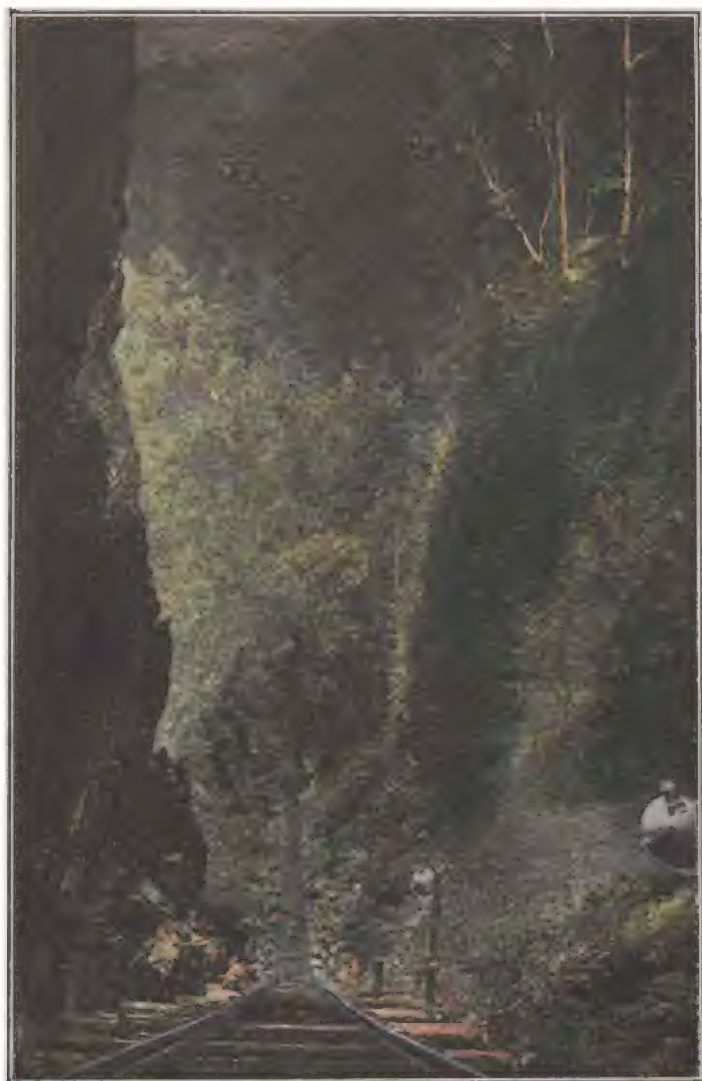
A steel cable, as thick as a man's arm spanned the valley for a distance of two miles and carried a flying fox, by means of which the valuable shale was transported from the mine to the landing stage, at a point where the present Katoomba Coal Mine now stands. This cable and flying fox is said to have cost the company which operated the mine, £50,000 to install, and the distance covered was a record for this type of gear.





THE TUNNEL

The passenger car moves off and enters the tunnel, slowly and surely descending that incredible incline, instantly you are fascinated by a magnificent picture of the Jamieson Valley and Mount Solitary, framed between the Orphan Rock and the main mountain.



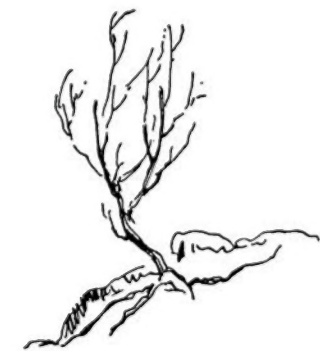
THE FLOODLIT SCENIC RAILWAY

The floodlights make a setting of appealing and delicate enchantment; the tawny rocks, graceful trees and giant tree ferns, become bewitchingly fantastic and unreal.

The only way in or out of the valley was by track and stairway. It ran from the top of the Scenic Railway down to the Orphan Rock, thence along by the present pithead to the bottom of the valley, past the Dogface Rock (now obliterated by the Landslide) to Narrow Neck. Along this, all supplies for the vanished village were conveyed, and up it came the miners when they wanted to visit the small township on the old Bathurst Road. This township consisted of three streets of cottages and a hotel; the licensee was Mr. Harry Edwards and the good beer he sold was 3d. a pint. The hotel still stands and is known as Falls House. One can imagine the sturdy miners, stumbling along the rocky pathway and cursing fluently when they happened to bark a shin or stub a toe, but consoled by the thought of the good long drink which awaited them when they reached the top.

Their wives, doubtless, wished the path were even rougher, except for the increased difficulty they would have in getting their household supplies and medical assistance, for the doctor lived close to the hotel. As elsewhere, babies were born in the now vanished village, and Mr. Franklin, a well-known driver of tourist cars in Katoomba, first saw the light there.

At last you come to the Ruined Castle. It is not, of course, a man-made castle, but a curious rock formation in the form of a natural fortress, with sparsely wooded slopes so exposed to the elements that the growth of the *Banksia* is stunted, gnarled and twisted into grotesque shapes, reminiscent of the dwarf trees so beloved by the Japanese. The rocks tower majestically upward casting long shadows in the late afternoon sun and as you do not wish to climb the 1,400 steps to reach the top of Katoomba Falls, or to be overtaken by darkness, you set off on the return journey and reach the landing stage before 4 p.m. Here you can rest in comfort for the Scenic Railway will take you up as it brought you down, quietly and competently, in time to admire the sunset, the tree trunks shining like burnished gold in the sun's long level rays, and the dusky velvet shadows deep in the valley.



1872

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